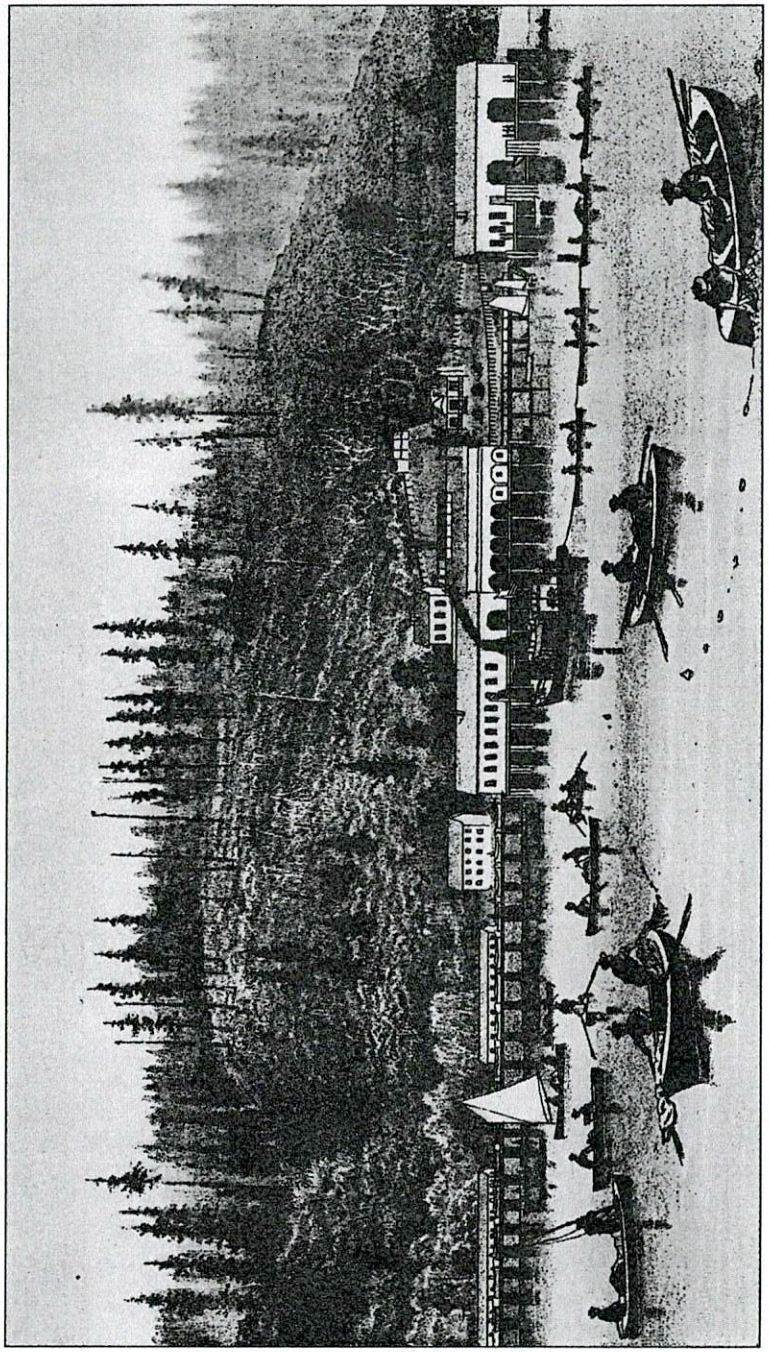

J.W. and Vincent Cook's cannery at Clifton in 1874.

CLIFTON, OREGON: A Place and Time

By Samuel A. Soter

The historic Lincoln Highway* leaves Portland on its westward route to its terminus at Astoria, Oregon. Along this short stretch of the highway are a number of small villages that, at present, provide little outward evidence of a more prominent past buried in time. Their names evoke a shared heritage: Scappoose, Kalama, Clatskanie and Wauna. (According to the *Oregon Geographic Names* book edited by Lewis L. McArthur, Wauna is thought to be a Klickatat name for a mythological being that represents the Columbia River.)

As the highway ascends the coast range and reaches the summit at Clatsop Crest a pause is in order. From the Bradley Wayside, at the crest, a wonderful view of the Columbia River is available The elevation at the crest is 656 feet above sea level and thus provides a panoramic view of a historically important segment of the Columbia River. Below, Puget Island, in its bucolic splendor, is centered in the river creating two river channels. To the north, rugged hills dressed in dense stands of stately trees form a background for the compact little town of Cathlamet, Washington clinging to the river's edge. To the left of this panoramic view, the main navigation channel of the Columbia River makes a fairly sharp bend to accommodate another island named Tennasillahe. A secondary channel runs westward at the south side of this second island and is known as the Clifton Channel. This is the waterway which is the essence of our portrait of a place called Clifton.

Puget Island was named for Lieutenant Peter Puget of the British Navy who was with Captain George Vancouver when the British explorer conducted a discovery exploration of the lower Columbia River in October of 1792. In the same year, but a few months earlier, another explorer visited the river: the American Captain Robert Gray in his ship the *Columbia Rediviva*.

Just beyond Clatsop Crest, as the highway starts its westward descent, lies the entrance to an undistinguished road leading away from the main highway. This narrow road follows a small stream that tumbles down from the heights seeking a junction with the Columbia River. The road passes through a canopy of elegant cottonwood trees and the ever-present majestic firs. The road's shoulder is lined

with delicate ferns and beautiful rhododendron plants. In less than three miles the road comes to a fork; one leg crosses the small stream and continues to the site of the former village of Bradwood, located at the river's edge, just below Clatsop Crest.

The other leg continues westward for about a mile along the river to a small rise and then passes through a former homestead and orchard, which at one time was the site of the home of one of the prominent families in Clifton. Just beyond, the road comes parallel with the railroad track and continues westward through what was once the village of Clifton. The dual passageway of the railroad tracks and the county road was Clifton's main street. The road clings to the steep hills that come down to the river's edge. These hills are densely wooded now with young trees which nature has sought to replace the majestic firs that once graced these hills. The ever-present fringe of wild blackberry vines forms a pleasant accent.

At first view, Clifton's physical presence is almost non-existent. Only a few small residential and commercial structures still cling to the river's edge or on pilings in the river. In the river and extending along the length of the former village are rows of decaying pilings, which once supported most of the village's physical self. The adjoining land area at Clifton lacked enough level ground to permit any substantial building; thus the community sought to build over the river on pilings, much like the beginning of the town of Astoria. This intimate association with the river created the unique micro world that was historical Clifton. Clifton came into being to reap the bounty of the river and declined to almost non-existence when the river withheld its bounty. The location, direction, length, and width of this channel provided a unique waterway, ideal for drift net fishing. It was as if nature created this particular river channel as a special passageway for salmon.

During its most active life, Clifton was an isolated community. From its beginnings in the 1870s and continuing for some twenty-five years, there was no way in or out of Clifton except by small boat. Before the railroad running through Clifton was built in 1898, the only way to and from Clifton was by a river passage for some five miles to the village of Cathlamet, Washington, where a connection could be made with the river steamers that connected Astoria with the Willamette Valley communities. These river vessels traveled the main channels of the river and thus bypassed Clifton. The *Columbia*, the first steamboat built in Oregon was built at Astoria. It connected Astoria with the inland community of Oregon City. There followed a number of river packets: *America*, *Hassalo*, *Astorian* and the well-known *Georgiana*. They traveled the river channel on the northern side of the island fronting Clifton. This island was named "Tennasillahe," a native Indian word meaning "little land." In reality, much of the island was submerged at high tide and during high river levels. When the Euro-Americans came and built the dikes, the island emerged and became the home of a large cattle ranch, dairy, and cheddar cheese making facility. When the railroad was built in 1898, a sidetrack was provided at Clifton's westward end to serve the needs of this island ranch operation. Although most of Clifton's significant physical self is no longer evident, its historical record is worthy of note. The once thriving community with its varied economic activity, its diverse ethnic population, and its historical roots was a place and time deserving a more prominent place in the historical record of the lower Columbia River and Clatsop County, Oregon.

The area along the south shore of the Columbia River from Clatsop Crest and extending westward to the edge of what became the village of Clifton was once the ancestral home of the Cathlamet Indians, a sub group of the Chinook Indians. This location offered an excellent site. The prominent Clatsop Crest and its surrounding hills offered a measure of protection from the winter's storms. The presence of a small stream feeding into the Columbia River at this site provided a good year round source of clean fresh water. The hills behind it were the home range of large herds of deer and elk and the river channel teemed with salmon. This truly was an ideal place.

Oral history confirms that various diseases commonly labeled "fever" or "ague," probably a virulent form of influenza,** wiped out almost 90 percent of the native Indian population of the lower Columbia River area between 1829 and 1833. The American physician John Kirk Townsand, who visited the area in 1834, wrote "The depopulation here has been truly fearful." It was after this significant event that the Cathlamet Indians left their ancestral home and relocated across the river to the present area around Cathlamet, Washington. They probably sought to escape the memories and contamination of their former homes. By the time the Euro-Americans started to settle in the lower Columbia River area, the native Indian depopulation had already taken place. In the 1840s it was estimated that the total population of the larger Oregon Territory was no more than 20,000 and fairly evenly divided between Native Americans and Whites.

In 1843, a true pioneer arrived in Oregon, one Henry Hunt. He had traveled west from his native Ohio along the Oregon Trail in covered wagons, carrying with him his "Mill Irons," machinery for creating a working sawmill. Henry Hunt was only 33 years of age and was determined to establish a lumber operation along the Columbia River somewhere near the mouth of the river to permit export of his lumber production. In Oregon City, the primary white settlement at that time, he sold his wagons and oxen teams and purchased a river flat-boat and supplies. He also acquired a partner named T. Benjamin Wood. The partners loaded their "mill irons" and supplies on their flat-boat and with a hired hand named Edwin Otey, a millwright, they headed downstream, a slow journey on the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, seeking an ideal location for their lumber mill. They eventually selected the point where a small stream emptied into the Columbia River at the site of the former ancestral home of the Cathlamet Indians.

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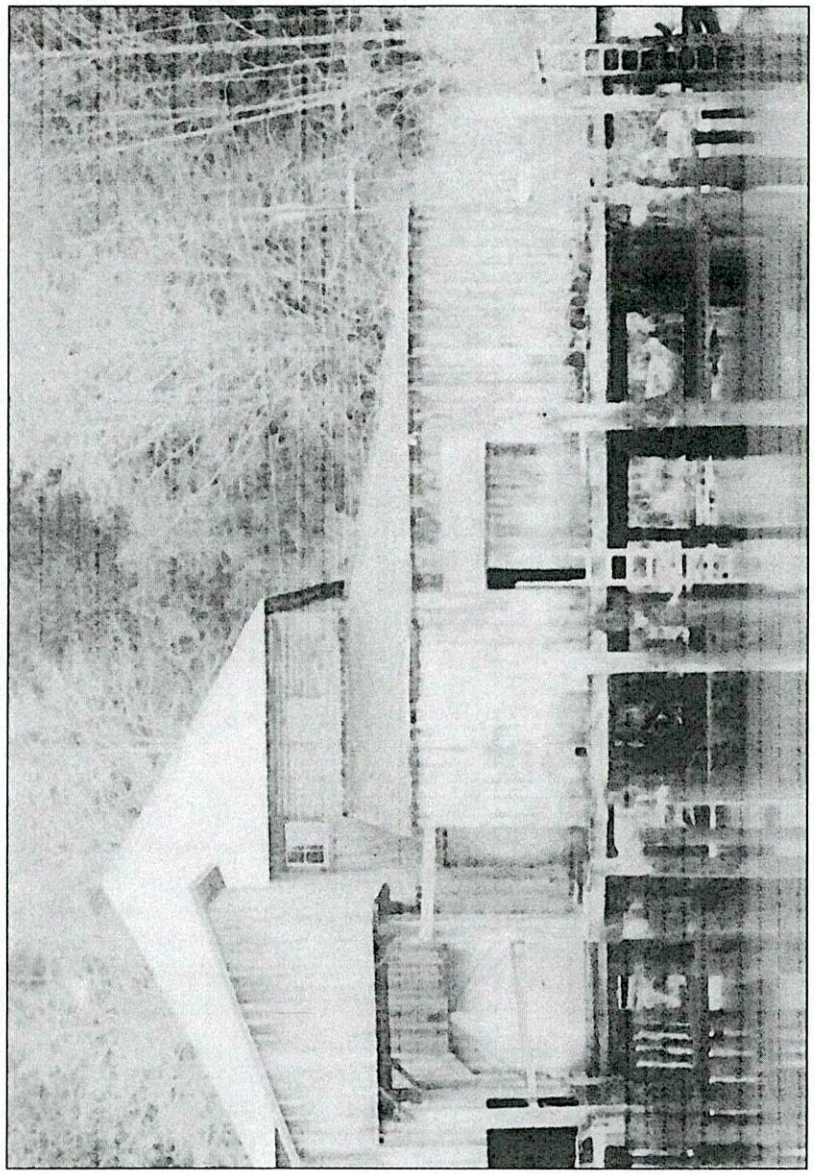

Clifton, Oregon. This net storage building is still standing.

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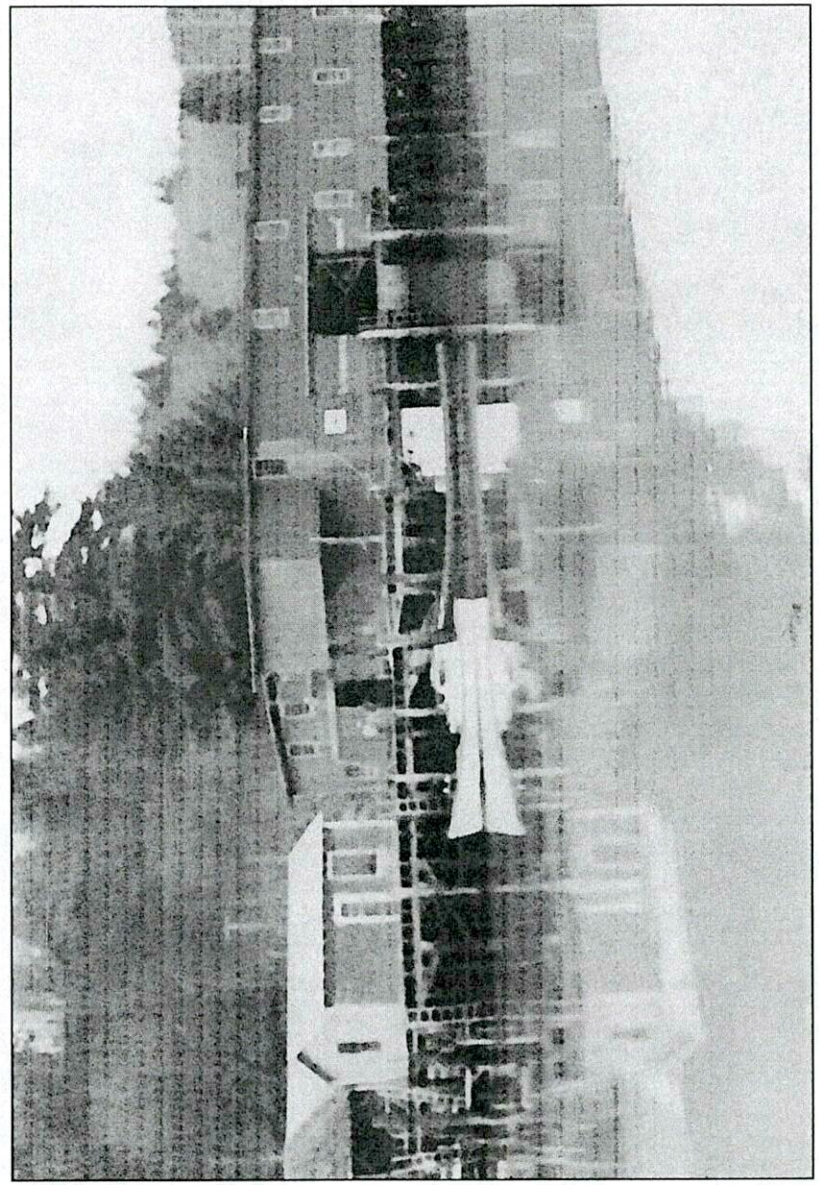


Clifton, Oregon. Clifton Receiving Station with net storage upstairs. Gas house is on left.

The Hunt party spent almost a full year creating their sawmill and related facilities. The mill was powered by a twenty-four foot diameter overshot wooden water wheel. When the mill was fully operational it employed 15 workers, of which five were Kanakas from Hawaii. Hunt paid the workers a wage of $5.00 per month and an allotment of salmon and potatoes. The production of the mill varied due to the seasonal availability of adequate water flow in the stream. On average the mill produced about 3000 board feet of lumber in a normal 12-hour work-day. Hunt also constructed ship-loading facilities along the river at deep water to accommodate his export requirements. The evidence of these facilities still exist in the decaying pilings along the river, in mute testimony of a vibrant past. It is of note that at the time Hunt established his mill, the population of white people at Astoria near the mouth of the river was only about 30.

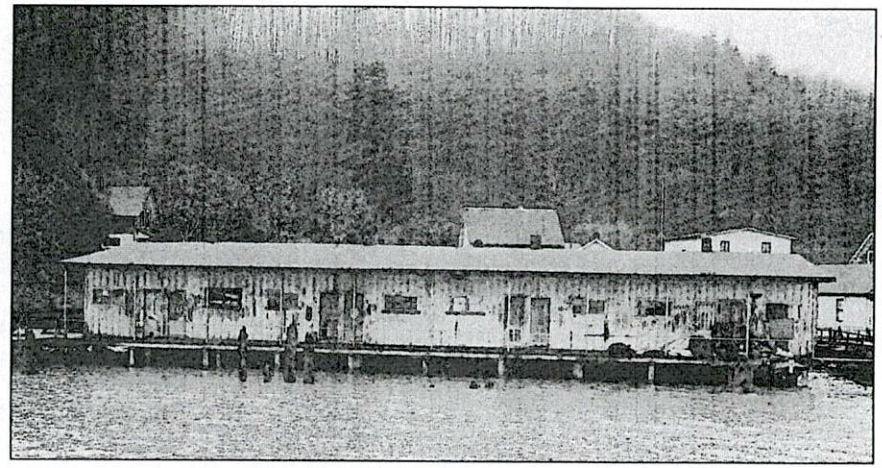
The first shipment of lumber from the Hunt mill was loaded on to the sailing vessel *Chenamus*. The cargo totaled about 50,000 board feet of lumber, primarily 2x4 studs and 1 inch planks. The bark *Toulon* and the brig *Henry* made frequent stops at the Hunt mill for lumber cargoes. Lumber was regularly shipped to California ports and as far away as Australia. The first cargo for Australia was on the British vessel *Onward* destined for Melbourne. In 1849, Hunt and another partner, established another water-powered sawmill at Tongue Point near Astoria. The successors to the Hunt lumber enterprises continued until about 1885 when the advent of steam powered sawmills made Hunt's water powered mills obsolete.

The hills adjoining the Clifton area were originally heavily forested with stands of fir and hemlock trees. These were first growth trees of extraordinary size. During Clifton's prosperity, logging was quite a significant industry in the immediate area. At one time there were five logging operations within three miles of Clifton. Logging and lumber operations contributed much to the economic well being of the area around Clifton before the establishment of a viable salmon fishery.

The history of Clifton as a recognized geographic entity began in 1856 when Stephen G. Spear, a Massachusetts cooper, settled on a land claim at the western end of what later became the village of Clifton. On September 6,1873, the Spears received title to their homestead claim of 144 acres, the only expanse of level land in the immediate area. The Spears had named their primitive home "Clifton Cottage," influenced perhaps by the steep hills that surrounded their homestead.

The hills behind Clifton are quite steep and crowd the railroad track, which hugs the river's edge. The village seems to cling to the river bank and the existing trees form a dense backdrop.

Clifton, in reality, was three distinct enclaves, located in an almost straight line along the river, each separated by open space. There was no road connection between these three enclaves before the railroad was built in 1898. The railroad right-of-way served as the main street until a county gravel road was constructed in the 1930s. Travel



Courtesy of Jack Marincovich

Bunkhouse for fishermen on the west end of Clifton.

between the enclaves originally was by boat. Each of the three enclaves shared a common look: fishing industry commercial structures and residences built on pilings in the river and moored fishing boats all in a straight line and extending over a half mile distance. The facilities were far enough into the river to provide safe berthing for the fishing boats in deep water since the tidal changes on the river at Clifton could be over six feet.

The salmon fishing industry in Clifton had its origin in 1873 when a Portland businessman, J.W. Cook, acquired a portion of the Spear farm and established a salmon cannery. This was at the western end of the village and was eventually the location of the Clifton Post Office. Cook's fish cannery was the second such operation in Oregon, the first being at Westport. The first salmon cannery on the Columbia was built at Eagle Cliff on the Washington shore of the river a short distance east of Clifton. Vincent Cook managed the operation and became the first postmaster in Clifton. The post office operated in Clifton for 82 years, until it closed in 1956.

A second salmon packing plant was established in Clifton at the eastern enclave by the Hume Brothers. The Hume brothers: George, William and Robert who came north from the Sacramento River are considered the fathers of the salmon packing industry on the Columbia River. By 1881, the Hume Brothers were responsible for about one-half of the 35 salmon packing operations in existence at that time. On August 27,1906, the articles of incorporation of the Manhattan Packing Company were filed with the County Clerk in Astoria; thus establishing the third packing plant in Clifton, located in the eastern Clifton enclave. In the heyday of salmon packing operations in Clifton, there existed a large two-story bunkhouse which housed a number of Chinese laborers that served the packing

plants. George Hume has been credited as the first to bring Chinese workers to Oregon, probably from the California Sacramento Delta area. By 1880 there were about 2000 Chinese living and working in Clatsop County, Oregon.

In the early years, the Clifton channel was a unique and significant source of salmon. The salmon fishery in and around Clifton was primarily conducted with drift nets and fishing boats modeled after a design originating in the state of Maine. The boats were propelled by oars and sails and the judicious use of the tidal flow in the river. They were double ended, at about 26 feet in length with little if any protective cabin space. In the early 1900s mechanical power was introduced in these fishing boats. Single cylinder heavy-duty five horse power gasoline engines with large flywheels were quite capable of moving the boats against the fairly significant river currents and making the life of the fishermen much easier. Later in time more advanced engines and improved boat designs came to the industry and with synthetic materials for the drift nets the productivity of the salmon fishermen increased compensating for the declining salmon runs that became a reality as the results of over-fishing.

In addition to drift-net fishing in the Clifton channel, there existed two fixed fish traps, one on each side of the channel and located at the up stream end of the channel.

As the salmon fishery matured on the Columbia River, the number of gillnet fishing boats grew to approximately 2500. The early use of a unique set of sails on these boats gave rise to the term "The Butterfly Fleet." The drift nets used were essentially a piece of netting, usually with a mesh measuring 8 inches, just large enough to snare the prized Chinook salmon.

Originally the nets were made of cotton twine. They had cedar corks with holes through them to contain a cork line to float the net and a leaded line at the bottom to keep the net in a fairly vertical position as it drifted with the river current, usually in an ebb tide. A floating buoy marked one end of the net while the other was usually at the boat. These nets measured 750 to 1000 feet in length and in the Clifton channel, they extended across most of the width of the channel providing a significant impediment to the salmon as they continued on their upstream journey. When the salmon runs were good, an average catch of 2000 pounds of salmon was possible in a single drift. The record for the lower Columbia River for a single night of fishing, which included two drifts, was 4495 pounds.

Gillnetting on the lower Columbia River was dangerous work and it was a rare year that fewer than a score of deaths were recorded. In 1874, a sudden storm hit the river and caught the fishermen by surprise, resulting in the deaths of twenty-six fishermen.

By 1884, over 600,000 cases of canned salmon were being packed and marketed from the annual salmon runs on the Columbia River. In 1875, twenty-four sailing vessels departed from Astoria with canned salmon cargoes. Most of these shipments were destined for Europe and Australia. In 1899 the salmon canning business on the Colum-

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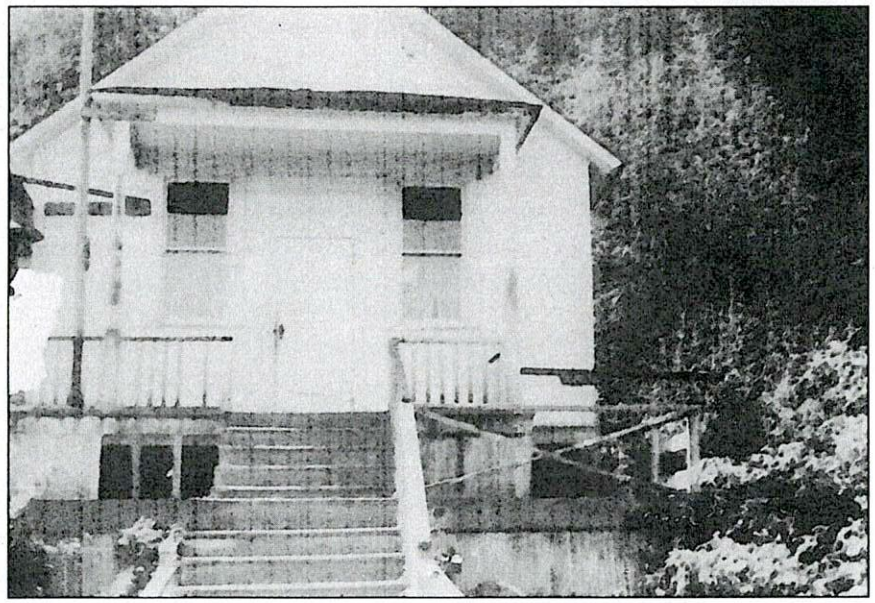


The building in the photograph above is the Clifton School which closed about 1945. Below is the Clifton Post Office which was established January 6, 1874 with Vincent Cook as first postmaster. The post office closed in 1966.

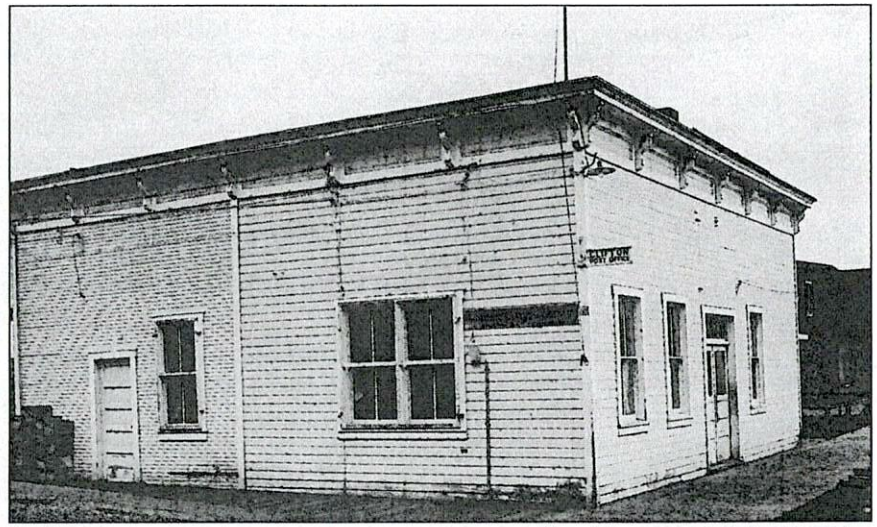


Photo Courtesy of Jack Marincovich

bia River began to retrench and consolidate. The salmon catches were declining and competition was accelerating. It was in 1899 that the famous Columbia River Salmon Packers Association was created [C.R.P.A.]. Seven individual salmon packing companies operating ten separate facilities were combined into one corporation, which eventually dominated the industry in the lower Columbia River. Two of the canneries located in Clifton were part of the combination and their closure significantly impacted the economy of the village. A total of eight canneries were closed and the remaining units were expanded to handle the production of the new entity.

For the individual Clifton fisherman, the banner years were indeed good. The catches were large and the fishermen were paid by fish count. In 1890, the price paid by the canneries was $1.00 per Chinook salmon. The fishermen operating out of Clifton were almost exclusively immigrants from Greece, Italy, Finland, Norway, and from the area of Europe which became Yugoslavia. A few mixed-blood, Native Americans were also present. The cannery workers were primarily Chinese. A truly diverse population operated the salmon fishery in Clifton. During the banner years of the salmon fishery in Clifton, the community was a bustling commercial center, with several salmon packing plants, a hotel, saloons and two general stores. Missing was a city hall, a jail, a fire department, streets and street lamps.

The Clifton community extended for over one-half mile along the river in an almost straight line. The three existing enclaves were separated by open space each containing clusters of housing and commercial facilities. The eastern most enclave was almost exclusively populated by immigrant Greek fishermen. The middle enclave was populated exclusively by immigrants from the Adriatic coast of Europe. The western most enclave was largely populated by a diverse collection of immigrants from Italy and the area in Europe known as Yugoslavia. A small number of mixed blood Native-Americans also lived in this enclave. The commercial activity was largely confined to the western and eastern enclaves.

On a typical Saturday night, the Clifton community in all its ethnic diversity was visited by loggers and sawmill workers as well as fishermen from adjoining fishing communities, which brought into the mix, native Hawaiians and native born Americans. Somehow this collection was relatively free of serious conflict. Communication between these ethnic groups was difficult for most spoke little or no English. The cooperation among the Clifton fishermen was remarkable. They shared the same fishing grounds, worked together to maintain the channel free from obstructions to their fishing nets and adhered to a uniform code of conduct which prescribed rules and protected their right to fish the channel. They defended their rights to this prized fishing ground with vigor.

Clifton, for most of its early existence, was a male dominated society. Few family units existed. As the immigrant fishermen prospered, they sought to bring wives from their native countries and establish families. Housing started to become more than bunkhouses. Flower pots and window curtains began to grace the humble homes. The atmosphere of isolation was tempered by the emerging presence of children. A one-room elementary school was established to serve the children. Extraordinary skill and patience was required of the teacher hired to serve the community for most of the children arrived at school, their first day, speaking little of the English language. They came from homes where English was rarely spoken. The most unusual result of this educational experience was the significant encouragement the children in Clifton received from their parents to learn and achieve. College graduates did come from the Clifton school. Enrollment rarely exceeded a total of thirty in all the eight grades.

The Clifton community began to decline first when the mill closed in the late 1880s and was further adversely impacted by the closing of the two fish processing plants in 1899. Salmon runs were declining due to over-fishing. The pressure exerted by this decline influenced the states of Oregon and Washington to seek to conserve the fishery by first outlawing the fixed fish traps and seining operations and then shortening the season for the drift fishermen. The impact on the economy of the lower Columbia River and Clifton was significant. Ghost towns along the river became a reality and population declined.

In 1930, a new lumber mill was established at the general area of the former Hunt mill at a new village named Bradwood. The Bradley-Woodard Lumber Company operated the mill until it was closed in 1963. This operation brought a renewed energy to the Clifton area. The mill employed about 150 workers at its height of activity. The village of Bradwood contained some 36 homes, a general store, a post office and a one-room elementary school. At present, little remains of this community.

Most of the area of the former sawmill was adversely impacted by the pumping of dredged river spoils onto the land and adjacent river frontage, in the effort to keep the main navigation channel of the Columbia River open for shipping traffic to upriver points. This has altered the landscape significantly and has covered the evidence of the historical past. The other result of the main river channel maintenance has been a silting up of the Clifton channel and its virtual end as a viable salmon fishing segment. The once productive fishing channel is no longer a reality.

The Clifton area with its rich historical heritage has received little acknowledgement. Hopefully this chronicle has served to enlighten and give due justice to the place where I was born and schooled. Few of us are left who have memories of this remarkable place.

Notes:

*The Lincoln Highway is usually thought of as going from Philadelphia to San Francisco, but at least one reference on the internet notes that Portland, Oregon was at the western end of the road.

**The disease that decimated the Indians on the Lower Columbia River may have been malaria.

LIVING IN CLIFTON

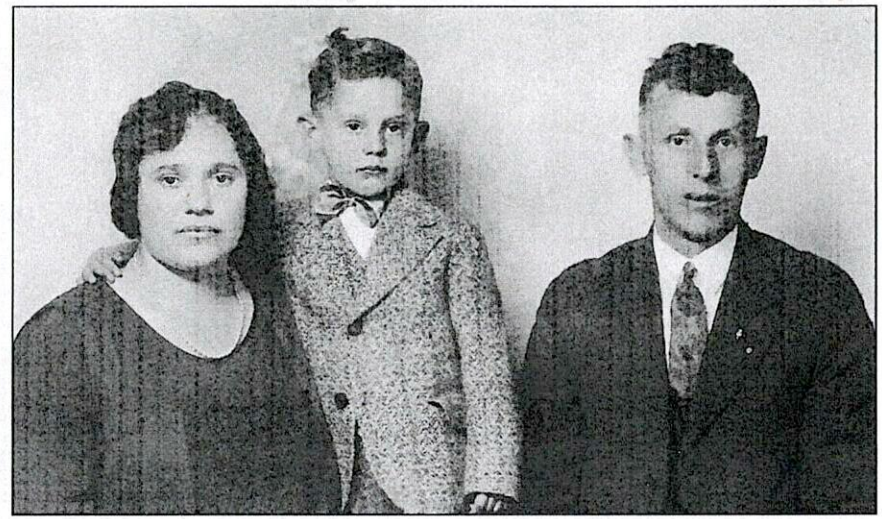
By Samuel A. Soter

I was born in 1924 and lived for my first ten years in the village of Clifton, Oregon. Today my childhood's physical world is almost non-existent. Time has been unkind to this isolated spot in Clatsop County. As I reflect on my experience living in that isolated micro world, wonderful memories come forth that tend to suppress thoughts of the negative influences that existed and were imposed by the harsh realities of life in that place and time.

During my first years in Clifton, the community was truly an isolated, remote and unique spot; very much tied to the Columbia River, which provided its vitality. Clifton was a village populated by salmon fishermen and their families; diverse demographically but united in a unique bond. A sameness imposed by the total dependence on the same source of economic well being.

In the 1920s, Clifton's population had declined from a more substantial self, to probably no more than 100 men, women and children. It had shrunk to three distinct and separate enclaves. This separation seemed to be based on demographics but in reality was influenced by the prior establishment of several salmon packing enterprises created by different entrepreneurs. How and why the different enclaves attracted different ethnic populations is lost in the passage of time. When I knew Clifton, it was populated almost exclusively by immigrants from Finland, Norway, Italy, Germany, Greece and a significant number from the Adriatic coast of Europe. Only one family of two adults and two mixed blood Native American Indian men living in Clifton were not immigrants. It was an unusual mix that somehow managed to co-exist and live in relative harmony.

The enclave in which I lived was dominated by immigrant families from the Greek islands, primarily from the Aegean Island of Andros. I was the fourth generation of my family to have lived in Clifton although I was the only native born. My father immigrated to the United States in 1906 at the age of 18 and continued to live his entire life here; never seeking to return to his origins. He became a true Yankee, served in the U.S. Army during World War I, became an American citizen, mastered the English language well and even learned to love baseball. He loved and appreciated his adopted country and sought to be a good citizen, serving as the chairman of the local school district. He was dedicated to and stressed the need for education, not only for his own children but for his extended family. He served as a role model for many.



Courtesy of Samuel A. Soter

The Soter Family in Clifton. Maria and Anton Soter with their son, Samuel.

Living in Clifton in the 1920s required acceptance of the physical containment imposed by the realities of the isolated location of the community but also by the isolation imposed by the cultural differences that existed in the demographic mix. It was furthered by the nature of our immediate physical surroundings.

My family's home was located in a large multi-unit wooden structure built entirely over the Columbia River on wooden pilings. This structure was part of a larger complex, which included a large warehouse building, formerly the home of a salmon packing facility; extensive wharf space, serving the fishermen as net racks; a fish receiving station facility and several additional single residences, all built on pilings and all interconnected. The river frontage of this complex was far enough out into the river to reach enough deep water to ensure safe moorage for the fishing boats during the significant daily tidal changes in the river.

The frontage facing the shore paralleled the existing railroad track embankment that was high enough to be safe from the river's highest tides. The complex was connected to this railroad artery by a narrow wooden walkway extending some one hundred feet. There was no level ground beyond the railroad tracks, for the steep hills came down to the water's edge. For many years, the railroad tracks were the only real connection uniting the several isolated residential and commercial complexes. We lived and worked in a maritime environment.

As young children, we lived and played on this maritime complex, ever

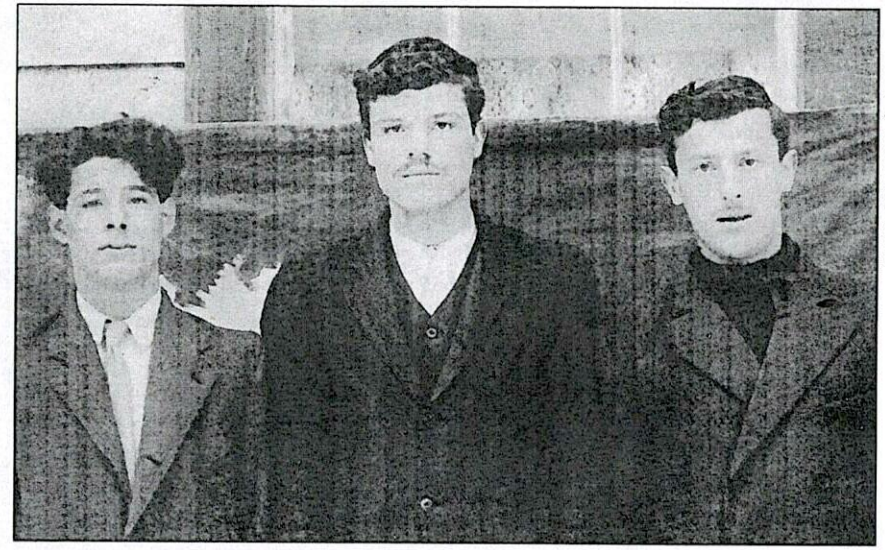
mindful of the fast flowing river, which underlined our little world. Few railings or barriers existed at the edges of this complex to act as safety elements; we survived.

My sister and I were the only children living in our immediate complex. We lived among a number of adult males, who were part of our extended family. They watched over us, taught us, let us know when we deviated from the cultural norm; they served as role models and above all, they exhibited caring and love that complemented that flowing from our parents. All these adult males had their own families and children in their far off Greek homeland, which they would visit for several months at a time every year or so, but they always returned to Clifton to carry on their economic pursuit of the prized Chinook salmon. They came from the Aegean Island of Andros, which to this day is a significant reservoir for mariners that operate the many Greek owned merchant vessels that ply the world's oceans. Theirs was an ancient maritime heritage.

Our water world provided no playground space and no sports activities. Few children resided near our home. The isolation extended to relationships with children from the other cultural enclaves in Clifton. When I first attended the elementary school, I joined two other children entering the first grade and unfortunately, none of the three had anything but a rudimentary command of the English language making communication very difficult. All three of us came from homes where the only language spoken was not English. I continue to marvel at the patience and skill of that teacher who managed to bring us together through the English language and the common pursuit of the educational experience. She broadened our former narrow isolated existence and gave us incentive to continue to seek and learn. Two of the three of us managed to earn a total of three university degrees; testimony to the quality of our educational experience and above all, the encouragement of our immigrant families.

The one unique thing that seemed to connect me with the outside larger world during those early years was related to the railroad. The trains, which passed on their daily schedules, held a particular facination for me. The trains connected Portland with Astoria and Seaside. Both passenger and freight trains passed and I looked forward to their coming with anticipation. They announced their passage by using their wonderful whistles. Those large mechanical marvels communicated the existence of a wider presence in the world somewhere out there.

My family's home had a non-discrete facade with little exterior paint. From the exterior, this structure exhibited no evidence of the comfort and stability that I experienced living there. No central heating, no electricity, no indoor plumbing and no rugs to warm the floor lying over the watery basement spaces. We had a great cast iron stove which served my mother's kitchen needs and helped keep our family room warm and cozy on those winter days. We were fortunate to have an ice-box cooler to keep our food fresh. Ice was readily available to us because it was shipped in daily for



Courtesy of Samuel A. Soter

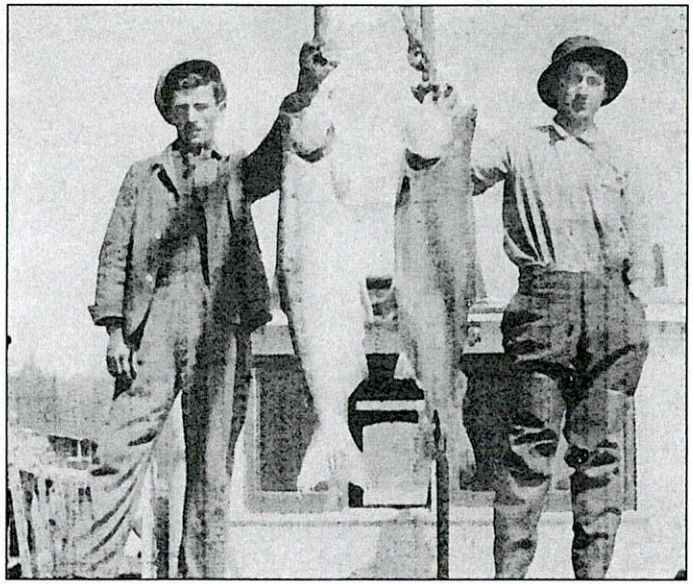
Three Clifton fishermen in the early 1920s. On the left: Leon Begleries; in the middle: George Falangus; on the right: Anton Soter.

use in the fish receiving station. The ice was useful during those few special occasions when the adults would agree to make ice cream for the children using those hand-cranked ice cream makers.

Our fresh water needs were supplied from a communal water source by a wooden water aqueduct, which brought a steady but limited flow of good clean cool water from a spring located in the hills behind our residential complex. One common element in front of every home in Clifton was a stack of cut firewood. Providing this resource was a continuing effort during the summer months. Floating logs were readily available in the river having escaped the care of lumber mills and logging operations. The ever-present pleasant smell of burning wood helped to counter the damp, muddy air that arose from our watery environment during low tides.

Our commercial complex and its satellite residential units that made up our little community exhibited an unusual togetherness, a wide reach of family members and relationships that had roots dating back to the Old Country. Cooperation was the rule. I don't ever remember any major or minor building project in our complex that didn't involve the participation of many. The annual grape processing of imported California wine grapes into wine, the cleaning and preparation of the very best Chinook salmon for smoking in the communal smoke house and the making of homemade pork sausages were always communal efforts.

The immigrant Greek fishermen living in Clifton were a very communicative and social people, in keeping with



Courtesy of Samuel A. Soter

The Author's father, Anton Soter, on the left and Ray Davis on the right. The prize salmon were just over 71 pounds.

their heritage. They needed little excuse for a celebration. Their calendar was quite full of religious holidays, birthdays, wedding anniversaries and national and international holidays that always brought forth a community wide celebration, in which the homemade wine was compared and tasted, and the ladies set out their wholesome food and delicious pastries. Even in the depths of the Great Depression of the 1930s our little community did not suffer for lack of plentiful and good food. As children, we wore patched-up trousers and hand-me-downs but we always had our milk and our Mediterranean diet. The local dairy in Clifton had lost most of its market for milk and cheese so to our benefit we had access to both at very little cost. We were fortunate also to have among our extended family group several hunters who always were able to provide ducks, geese, deer, and elk to supplement our diet, which was largely based on fish. Small garden plots were prominent, all built in large wooden fish boxes or half wine barrels to provide a limited supply of vegetables. My family also had constructed a small chicken coop that contained enough chickens to supply us with eggs and sometimes a chicken dinner. A large measure of self-sufficiency was the rule in our community.

One special event in our lives, as children, was the occasional boat trip of five miles to the town of Cathlamet, Washington, the county seat of Wahkiakum County. These were shopping trips for basic staples that were unavailable in Clifton. For the children it was exposure to another wider world of paved streets and sidewalks, multi-story buildings, electric lights, automobiles and ice cream parlors. Other boat trips were to the nearby villages of Wauna and Westport, both lumber mill towns where we would visit friends and relatives.

The great economic depression of the 1930s had a decided effect on our community. The salmon packers in Astoria were not buying fish or when they were, the price paid the fishermen was very depressed. One saving factor was the arrival in the Clifton Channel of a large fish processing ship from Japan, which started to purchase salmon for cash. The cash flow was very welcome and contributed to the community's survival. Our frugal nature and the emphasis on self-sufficiency carried us through the worst of times. The uniformity of the depression in the community did not result in any individual feelings of inadequacy for we were all in the same predicament. We may have lacked some material necessities but we never succumbed to self-pity nor did we loose the will to continue.

When I reached the age of about eight years, my father started to take me along on his frequent trips to Astoria for his medical care. We would take the morning passenger train to Astoria and returned on the late afternoon train. When we arrived in Astoria, my father would give me my usual allowance of twenty-five cents which was sufficient for candy and a matinee performance at the Liberty Movie Theater. I thoroughly enjoyed my western action movie serials that were the vogue in those days. My heroes were Ken Maynard and Buck Jones. I felt very privileged, for few if any of my childhood friends in Clifton had the same opportunity.

In the late 1930s my father's health started to deteriorate and he needed to be nearer the Veterans' hospital in Portland for extended medical care. The family relocated to Portland. We left Clifton reluctantly for we were leaving friends and immediate family. Portland would be a new and challenging adventure for me. I also had to leave behind my pet dog, "Hector," who had been my companion since early on. Hector and I had formed a unique bond and he had assumed the role of my protector. Hector was a large dog of dubious pedigree but possessed of strength and a special dedication. We went everywhere together. He would walk with me to school and to the village post office to pick up the family's mail and our copy of the Astoria newspaper. During play periods or visits to the other Clifton enclaves, Hector would always accompany me, standing by to see that no harm came to me. No one could approach me in anger without being challenged by Hector.

Clifton had a positive influence on my life. Living in that isolated and confining environment helped form character and establish life values. Above all, the love and caring received from my extended family and the number of my unofficial godfathers, tempered the reality of the lonely existence. My fond memories of Clifton linger to this day some eighty years later.

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